



RETHINK ERIE
208 E. Bayfront Parkway, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507
Office: (814) 454-7191
www.rethinkerie.com

Project Charter

Date: November 21, 2008

Modification Date: June 25, 2009

The Project Charter formally recognizes the existence of a project. It describes the project at a high level and explains the business need for it; it also outlines the scope – what is in the project, and what is out. The charter authorizes the Project Manager to plan the project, and the other members of the team to expend resources to complete the project. The Charter must be signed by the Leadership Team.

1. Project Description

The project will determine the feasibility of, and programmatic design options for, a post-secondary education institution to serve Northwest Pennsylvania, and, if warranted, to subsequently prepare an application to establish a community college in northwest PA for consideration and review by regional stakeholders and submission to the Pennsylvania Board of Education. The application will follow the requirements specified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education “Guidelines for the Establishment of Public Community Colleges in Pennsylvania.” The project will be sustained through the period of consideration until the Commonwealth reaches a final decision.

2. Business Objectives and Success Criteria

Northwestern Pennsylvania is not served by a community college, although it supports the other 14 Pennsylvania community colleges through its tax revenues. In addition, Erie County has acute workforce needs, an eroding tax base combined with an increased demand for social services, escalating poverty, and low post-secondary education rates, all of which could benefit from a community college that would provide low-cost and accessible post-secondary education and job-focused curricula.

An approved application would establish a community college, which would address the following regional concerns:

- Region needs more skilled workers. Regional businesses are having difficulty finding skilled workers, making it tough to compete; also adversely affects business attraction efforts.
- Region needs affordable education opportunities. Many are unemployed or underemployed, but cannot or will not attend a four-year college; need affordable educational opportunities that will help them earn sustainable wages.
- Region needs more post-secondary training options. There is no formal system for public post-secondary training; existing training options are costly, fragmented, and/or difficult to access, and there is no central entity effectively promoting and coordinating.

In addition, a community college would have both direct and indirect economic benefits that would accrue to both public and private sectors.

Measurements of project success include, but are not limited to:

- Community engagement in the feasibility study and planning efforts, and continuation of community, industry, business, and education group involvement after the feasibility study is complete;
- Identification of a “local sponsor”, as defined by the Commonwealth;
- Secured financial and/or conceptual support from the local sponsor and the general public for establishing and sustaining a community college, if the feasibility study demonstrates the need;
- Additional funding secured through other public and/or private sources to support a community college;
- Commonwealth of PA approval of an application to establish a community college, if the feasibility study demonstrates need and the community moves forward with application submission; and
- Use of information garnered throughout the feasibility study and planning process to support broader workforce and economic development initiatives throughout the region.

3. Key Stakeholders

Key Stakeholder Groups	Role
1. County of Erie Administration, County Executive	Leadership Team
2. County of Erie Administration, Representative	Leadership Team
3. Erie County Council	Leadership Team
4. Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership	Leadership Team
5. Manufacturing business, Representative	Leadership Team
6. Non-manufacturing business, Representative	Leadership Team
7. Northwest Industrial Resource Center	Leadership Team
8. Philanthropic community, Representative	Leadership Team
9. Social service agency/provider, Representative	Leadership Team
10. Consultants	Project Team
11. Work Groups	Project Team
12. Local University Presidents (Edinboro, Gannon, Mercyhurst, Penn State – Behrend, LECOM, Allegheny, Pitt-Titusville)	Presidents’ Forum
13. School district administrators	Project Team and/or interview/forum participants
14. Public sector leaders	Project Team and/or interview/forum participants
15. Economic developers	Project Team and/or consultant advisory team
16. industry leaders (healthcare, manufacturing, service sectors)	Project Team and/or interview/forum participants
17. Community leaders	Project Team and/or interview/forum participants
18. Other post-secondary leaders, including proprietary schools	Project Team and/or interview/forum participants

4. Project Scope

The project scope includes significant research in a three-county area to determine the region's workforce related needs. It also includes the preparation of an application to establish a community college as specified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education "Guidelines for the Establishment of Public Community Colleges in Pennsylvania." This portion of the project work will follow a three-step process: Analysis, Options, and Plan. Analysis includes review of prior work, data, and comparables. The importance of this step is to start with no assumptions, since ours needs to be a deliberate and thoughtful process that looks at all alternatives. Options illustrate ways to achieve the region's goals. After review, one option will be selected as the best to pursue for the application. The project will be sustained through the period of consideration until the Commonwealth reaches a final decision.

The project also includes creation of a logo and name for the project, and design and maintenance of a Web site as part of the communications and outreach activities undertaken for the application. The project does not include supplemental work that may be required by the Commonwealth during the post-submittal review process.

5. Assumptions and Dependencies

- Assumption: The project will follow the "Guidelines for the Establishment of Public Community Colleges in Pennsylvania" issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education, dated August 18, 2008. It is assumed that the Project Team will obtain enough clarification of the guidelines from PDE to determine work assignments.
- Assumption: The feasibility study will indicate the need for a community college and an application will be prepared as part of the project. Therefore, to the extent possible, project planning and project work will precede the completion of the feasibility study.
- Assumption: Leadership Team, working with the Project Manager, will identify additional funds and/or in-kind services for consultants and/or resources deemed to be necessary to complete the application (if needed).
- Dependency: The final content of the application will depend upon the results of the Clements Group Feasibility Study and Community Assessment work.
- Dependency: The Leadership Team must identify an entity as defined by Commonwealth law that will serve as local sponsor or lead the sponsor consortium, and will participate in funding the local (sponsor) portion.

6. Major Milestones and Deliverables

Major Milestones or Deliverables	Target
Project Team Meeting	January 2009
Completion of Analysis Phase Tasks	February 2009
Feasibility Study and Workforce Needs Assessment	December 2008-February 2009
Community Assessment	December 2008-February 2009
Public presentation of completed research	April 2009
Completion of Options Phase Tasks	August 2009
Strategic Visioning	September 2009

Completion of Plan Phase Tasks	October 2009
Draft Application and Reviews	November/December 2009
Sponsor and stakeholder consideration/approvals of Final Application	Spring 2010
Submit to State Board of Education (if warranted)	Spring 2010

7. Business Risks

The following have been identified as business risks and will be evaluated for likelihood, impact, overall risk, and mitigation by the Leadership Team:

- Feasibility study will not justify an application.
- Erie County Council will not commit to the funding requirements of the application.
- Community will not support paying for a community college.
- Private post-secondary technical schools will not support the planning process or application.
- Post-secondary institutions will not support the planning process or application.
- Additional resources (funds, consultants, participants) will be needed to complete a successful application.
- State Board of Education does not approve the application.
- Community non-support: Build it, and no students come?
- State funding: Competition with the other community colleges.
- Election cycle impact.
- Timing risk (given the economy).

8. Resources

Resource	Source
Feasibility Study (Clements Group)	Contract with NWIRC
Community Assessment (Clements Group)	Contract with NWIRC
Application Preparation (Dr. David Pierce)	Contract with Erie County
Project Manager (Judith Fagin)	Erie Community Foundation grant to the ERCGP
Project Coordinator (Dr. Judith Miller)	Black Family Foundation grant to the ERCGP
Communications and Outreach	TBD
Financial and Economic Benefit Analyses	TBD
Application Reproduction and Distribution Expenses	Black Family Foundation grant to the ERCGP

9. Approvals

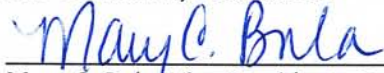
We, the undersigned, acknowledge our role as members of the Leadership Team. We agree with the content as presented in this charter, and we agree to use this charter as a basis for the project. We agree to actively support the project, to participate in all activities required or expected of Leadership Team members, and to actively champion the concept of a community college.



Michael L. Batchelor, President
Erie Community Foundation

6/25/09

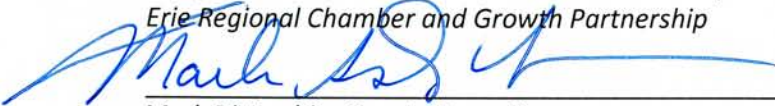
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Mary C. Bula, Vice President, Growth Partnership
Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership

6/25/09

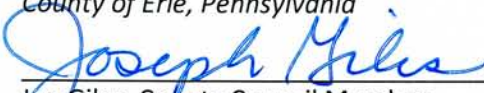
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Mark DiVecchio, County Executive
County of Erie, Pennsylvania

6/25/09

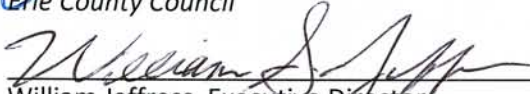
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Joe Giles, County Council Member
Erie County Council

6/25/09

Date



William Jeffress, Executive Director
Booker T. Washington Center

6/25/09

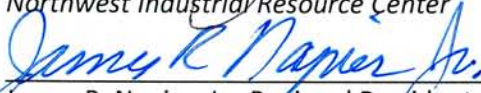
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Chet Kempinski, Executive Director
Northwest Industrial Resource Center

6/25/09

Date



James R. Napier, Jr., Regional President
Pennsylvania Electric Company

6/25/09

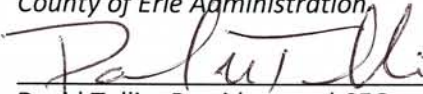
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Robert Spaulding, Director of Economic Development
County of Erie Administration

6-25-09

Date



David Tullio, President and CEO
Custom Engineering

6/25/09

Date